

Message Text

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46

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-13 OMB-01 EB-11 COME-00 AID-20

IGA-02 ACDA-19 MC-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 PC-04 NIC-01 RSR-01 /183 W

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R 121252Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8280

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

USUN NEW YORK 816

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRETORIA 2390

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, MARR, SF, RH

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE MAKE SHOW OF HELICOPTERS
IN SALISBURY

1. ACCORDING TO AFRIKAANS PRESS, SIX SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE
(SAP) HELICOPTERS, PROBABLY SUPER FRELONS, MADE PUBLIC APPEARANCE
IN SALISBURY EARLIER THIS WEEK IN CONNECTION WITH CELEBRATION
OF FOUNDERS DAY. THEY WERE PUT THROUGH PACES WITH LOW PASSES
OVER CITY TO ENSURE MAXIMUM VISIBILITY. THIS WAS FIRST TIME
SAP HELICOPTERS HAVE BEEN SEEN IN PUBLIC OVER RHODESIA.

2. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, IT NOT SURPRISING THAT HELICOPTERS
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CAUSED SENSATION IN SALISBURY AND ELICITED FLOOD OF RUMORS

THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAD DECIDED INCREASE ITS SECURITY FORCES IN RHODESIA IN LIGHT RECENT SPECTACULAR GUERRILLA OPERATIONS THERE. AMONG RUMORS REPORTEDLY MAKING ROUNDS OF SALISBURY WERE REPORTS THAT SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER VORSTER MADE SECRET VISIT TO RHODESIA LAST WEEK TO DISCUSS SECURITY SITUATION AND THAT HELICOPTERS BELONGS TO SOUTH AFRICAN ARMY AND REPRESENTED FIRST ELEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENSE FORCE (SADF) PRESENCE IN RHODESIA.

3. EVIDENTLY CONCERNED BY RUMORS OF SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT, CHIEF DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF SAP, P.J. VENTER, HAS REACTED WITH STATEMENT THAT HELICOPTERS BELONGED TO SAP AND NOT RPT NOT TO SADF. HE ADDED, "THERE ARE ALSO ONLY POLICEMEN IN RHODESIA. THE ARMY IS CERTAINLY NOT INVOLVED IN THIS AFFAIR." RHODESIAN DEFENSE MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT HELICOPTERS WERE "PART OF THE NORMAL BACKING-UP AIRCRAFT FOR SOUTH AFRICAN POLICE IN THIS COUNTRY."

4. COMMENT: SAP HELICOPTERS APPARENTLY HAVE BEEN OPERATING IN SUPPORT OF SAP OPERATIONS IN RHODESIA FOR SOME TIME. THEIR PUBLIC APPEARANCE AT THIS JUNCTURE WAS PROBABLY INTENDED AS DEMONSTRATION OF STRENGTH TO REASSURE WHITES IN BOTH RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA THAT SECURITY SITUATION STILL UNDER CONTROL. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF ANY SAG DECISION TO INCREASE ITS SECURITY FORCES IN RHODESIA OR TO INTRODUCE SADF THERE. IN PAST, SAG HAS REPEATEDLY DISCLAIMED ANY SUCH INTENTIONS. RUNAWAY RUMORS CIRCULATING AFTER APPEARANCE OF HELICOPTERS WOULD APPEAR TO ATTEST TO UNSETTLING IMPACT OF RECENT GUERRILLA OPERATIONS AND NOTHING MORE.
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